

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, BBAK, EINV, NL

SUBJECT: LOCKHEED AND THE PRINCE

REF: THE HAGUE 0750

1. AS EXPECTED, INTENSE LEVEL OF INTEREST IN LOCKHEED/PRINCE BERNHARD AFFAIR IS BEGINNING TO DROP A BIT. GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC FIGURES ARE AVOIDING COMMENT NOW THAT FORMAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY HAS BEEN GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR CASE. NEVERTHELESS, PRESS INTEREST CONTINUES HIGH WITH DUTCH JOURNALISTS SCURRYING OFF TO WASHINGTON AND SWITZERLAND AND FOREIGN (INCLUDING MANY AMERICANS) REPORTERS DESCENDING ON THE HAGUE.

2. GOVERNMENT HAS GOTTEN BACK TO BUSINESS OF BEING A GOVERNMENT
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RAPIDLY. DURING LAST TWO DAYS PARLIAMENT HAS BEEN DISCUSSING

GOVERNMENT'S REPORT ON HANDLING OF MOLUCCAN TERRORIST ACTION; FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH VISIT OF ROMANIAN FONMIN MACOVESVU; AND CHRONIC BICKERING AMONG POLITICIANS BEGINNING OCCUPY NEWS AGAIN. ONE BREAK IN GON'S "HANDS-OFF POLICY" REGARDING COMMENT ON PRINCE OCCURRED WHEN GOVERNMENT INFORMATION OFFICE RELEASED STORY THAT PRINCE HAS BEEN RECEIVING LARGE VOLUME OF MAIL IN SUPPORT OF HIS POSITION. PRIMIN DEN UYL REPORTEDLY REACTED ANGRILY TO THAT. ROYAL HOUSEHOLD WAS APPARENTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR PLANTING STORY WITH INFORMATION OFFICE. SUBSEQUENT STORIES EVEN SEEM CAST DOUBT ON FACT THAT MAIL HAS BEEN HEAVY.

3. ALTHOUGH TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INVESTIGATION BY THREE-MAN COMMISSION CALL FOR A REPORT AND CONCLUSIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, WE ARE BEGINNING TO HEAR REPORTS THAT INQUIRY MAY TAKE AS LONG AS A YEAR. SHOULD THAT PROVE TO BE THE CASE, WE SUSPECT THAT, IN THE MEANTIME, CONTRADICTIONS OF THE "TRUE FACTS" WILL BE THE RULE. ALREADY WE ARE SEEING WIDELY CONFLICTING REPORTS FROM WHAT ARE ALLEGED TO BE THE SAME SOURCES IN THE DUTCH PRESS.

4. ANOTHER WORRISOME PROBLEM WE SEE (AND WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO CONCERNED) IS THE LIKELIHOOD THAT NEWSPAPERS, PARTICULARLY FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS, MAY BEGIN TO PRINT SCANDAL STORIES ABOUT THE PRINCE. SEVERAL US REPORTERS WE HAVE TALKED WITH HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY ARE NOT PREPARED, AS THE DUTCH PRESS ALWAYS HAS BEEN, TO IGNORE RUMORS CONCERNING THE PRINCE'S PRIVATE LIFE. SEVERAL EDITORIALISTS HAVE ALREADY COMMENTED ON US IRRESPONSIBILITY IN ALLOWING THE STORY OF LOCKHEED PAYMENTS TO THE PRINCE TO SURFACE. SHOULD THE US PRESS SPREAD WHAT WOULD BE SEEN HERE AS JOURNALISTIC DIRT, THE REACTION AGAINST THE US COULD INCREASE.
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